

**Minutes of the Meeting of Doddinghurst Parish Council General Purpose Committee held at 7.30 pm on the 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021 in the Parish Room, (adjacent Village Hall), Church Lane, Doddinghurst, Essex, CM150NJ**

**Present: Cllrs. Gerry Smith, Julia Le Page, Phil Arnell, Diane Rogers-Harrison, Katie Pond.**

1. **Resolution:** To appoint a Chairman of the Committee. Cllr G Smith was appointed Chairman.
2. **Apologies for absence.** Cllrs D Potter and Tricha Brooks did not attend.
3. **Declaration of interests relating to items on the agenda.** None declared
4. **Resolution:** To approve minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Minutes approved and signed.
5. **Information:** Update on activities undertaken since 29<sup>th</sup> April 2021 meeting.
  - (i) Highways Repairs. The Clerk reported on the BBPCA meeting feedback relating to the work going at in the Local Highways Panel and that Doddinghurst were not active in its work. The notes of the last meeting were passed to Cllr G Smith for follow up with the Parish Council's sole representative, Cllr Hugh Gorton of KHPC, for follow up.
  - (ii) Grass Verges: Numerous complaints have been made, across the entirety of the Borough Council, about the state of the grass verges. The land belongs to ECC and cannot be cut by the Parish Council without permission and if the Parish were to obtain permission and do the work the probability is that the Parish would remain forever responsible, and receive no funding for the work.
  - (iii) The proposed ditch on Peartree Field remained unresolved but the gap in the hedgerow had been blocked by a very large tree trunk and as a result the committee recommended that all action on the ditch be dropped.
6. **Information:** Play Area: RoSPA May 2021 inspection report and Broadmead leisure June 2021 Inspection report. These were reviewed and it was noted that all the actions were low risk and that Broadmead leisure had them scheduled for repair. The only exception was the safety surfacing around the Wicksteed slide which was made of Wicksteed tiles. Some of the tiles were degrading and the tile joints need regular clearing to prevent the build up of weeds and degraded tiles need replacement. This can be better managed by a maintenance regime rather than an expensive wholesale replacement.
7. **Information:** CPA planned maintenance activity and replacement the open bin in the Play area. The Clerk is to reconfirm the maintenance work programmed with Broadmead Leisure and for Ken Roast to place a new base in the litter bin metal liner to cover the gap.
8. **Information:** Risk Assessments by Parish Councillors. These are ongoing and following the elections Councillors have been reallocated with Cllr Michael Capon picking up the definitive map footpaths status reports and Cllrs Katie Pond and Deborah Dicker the Children's Play Area. The returns are to go to the Deputy Clerk.
9. **Information:** Update on the Zip Wire Accident Claim. The Claim management company are still gathering data and have approached Broadmead leisure and the Parish Council Groundsman for verbal reports (e.g., by phone) on the work they did for the Parish Council.
10. **Information:** Cherry Trees in the Village Park area. These are to be planted in November 2021. A plaque is being organised at a cost of £210 to be paid from the Chairman's allowance.
11. **Information:** Update on bench refurbishment (Brush Man) and new bench provision. Three benches have been refurbished, two on Peartree Green and one on Peartree Field. A further new bench is being provided for Peartree Field and "Odd Job" has quoted for its installation on an existing base.
12. **Information and Resolution:** Tree reported fallen into the Peartree Pond. The tree is a wild sapling and is in the hedgerow adjacent the dog litter bin. It is not in or near the pond. The trunk of the tree has bent over to 90 degrees provably due to the weight of water on the leaves following a very dry spell. The committee recommended cutting up the tree if it cannot be "stood up" and "logging" the offcut and leaving to die back by the ditch.
13. **Information:** Progress on agreement with Football Club over the use of the Playing Fields. Cllr G Smith is trying to organise a meeting between the Village Hall chairman (Alan Farrow) Cllr A Smith and himself with the Football Team manager but so far no date has been agreed and no dialogue

is ongoing. The Committee considered the merits of the Village having or not having a football related activity in the village. In principle the Parish Council would like to see the Council's football fields used for the benefit of children in the Village but since the folding up of DOFC there is no Doddinghurst based team seeking to use the fields. The current users are using the fields with no agreement in place and vast majority of the players are observed to be from outside the village. The downside of this is that with several matches a day on the weekend there is a severe overload of the available car parking in the village, the Parish Council is paying for the maintenance of the fields with no contribution either via Council precept or by contribution from the Football organisers. The notice of matches is minimal and the Village Hall fee paying customers and Village Church goers are adversely affected by the sudden influx of dozens of cars whose drivers park indiscriminately and swamp the Village Hall and adjacent roads. Finally, there is a container on Village Hall land that is there without planning permission that was left following the demise of DOFC. It was promised by the DOFC manager that it would be removed but it is still in place and the football club users ignore the fact that the container has no right to be on V Hall land but is now in regular use to store Football users' goalposts and white lining kit. The committee concluded that disadvantages to the village outweighed the advantages and that all football activity should be banned on the Parish Council land unless it can be proven that Doddinghurst children are the majority players in the "home" team and a formal agreement is in place with the Club organisers.

14. **Information:** Progress on specification of Nature Trail Work. Ongoing with Cllr G Smith.
15. **Information and Resolution:** Plan for Maintenance Works of the Parish Room, External Doors and the main corridor and Gents Toilets. The Council approved the Draft paper for the Phase 2 renovation for completion and submission to full council on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 2021.
16. **Information:** Parish Council Power consumption and V Hall Grass cutting costs. The paper was reviewed and Cllr Le Page offered to provide the latest electricity contract charges. The chairman of the Village Hall is to discuss with the Clerk.
17. **Information:** Update on Scribe cemetery package. Activity to establish the Scribe cemetery package has commenced, The Deputy Clerk is taking the lead on this activity and is working with Scribe to set up the initial database. As all the current paper records have to be transferred to the new database it will take some months to complete
18. **Information:** Burial Ground Maintenance matters – Green Waste removal and ashes tablets. The green waste on the site has been removed. The Clerk to contact RM Wilks Ltd who had promised to demonstrate an approach he recommended to stop the ashes tablets becoming mobile but still permit their removal when required.
19. **Information:** Burial Ground Interments from April 2021 to date. This financial year interments have been scarce with one ashes plot re-open planned and one pending.
20. **Information:** BBC Fun Day on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021. The date has been confirmed on public media but the organisers have proven to be difficult to contact. The use of the recreational field where the play area is located and the Village Hall has been requested.
21. **Information:** Zoom contract closed.
22. **Any Other Urgent Business strictly for information only.** BT Account contract renegotiated due to high phone charges following the ending of the previous contract. Land Registration. The Cemetery and the Children's Play area (Scout Path Field) do not appear to be registered with the Land Registry as belonging to the Parish Council.

**The meeting closed at 22.00**

**Meeting signed:**

**Date: 14<sup>th</sup> October 2021**